



BUILDING A BREASTFEEDING  
FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

*Information for  
Businesses*



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# BREASTFEEDING WELCOME HERE

## *Business Initiative*

### VISION

It is our vision that breastfeeding is culturally accepted and that our communities will be healthier places when women and families are given the support they need and deserve to reach their goals.

### PURPOSE OF THIS INITIATIVE

- For businesses in the Okanagan communities to adopt a 'Breastfeeding Friendly' Policy
- This allows for breastfeeding families to feel welcomed and supported to breastfeed anytime, anywhere in their community

## BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES TO BECOME BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY

**BREASTFEEDING FAMILIES WILL VISIT YOUR ESTABLISHMENT MORE FREQUENTLY IF THEY ARE ABLE TO ATTEND TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR CHILD.**

- If their experience was positive, they are likely to come back

**YOUR BUSINESS WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN A COMMUNITY EFFORT THAT:**

- Promotes optimal health for children and families
- Lowers healthcare costs

**BEING 'BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY' CAN INFLUENCE A FAMILY'S DECISION ON WHERE THEY CHOOSE TO GO ON OUTINGS.**

YOU WILL BE INCLUDED IN OUR LISTING OF BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY PLACES AND OUR COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS





# 4 EASY STEPS

## *to become breastfeeding friendly*

1.

**CONTACT OK BREASTFEEDING (SEE PAGE 10).**

2.

**REVIEW THE 'BREASTFEEDING WELCOME HERE' BUSINESS TOOLKIT WITH YOUR STAFF.**

- Ensure staff understand the BC Human Rights Code in relation to breastfeeding and why breastfeeding is important for the health of mothers, babies, and communities.

3.

**CREATE A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE**

- Discuss with staff ways they can be welcoming (see 'A Guide for Staff'). §
- Be prepared to sensitively deal with any concerns another patron may have regarding public breastfeeding, without infringing on the rights of the breastfeeding mother.

4.

**DISPLAY THE 'BREASTFEEDING WELCOME HERE' STICKER AT THE ENTRANCE OF YOUR BUSINESS (OR POSTER).**

**ONCE THESE CRITERIA HAVE BEEN MET, YOU WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS A 'BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY BUSINESS AND YOU WILL BE:**

- Included on the list of 'Breastfeeding Friendly' businesses on the website [www.okanaganbreastfeeding.org](http://www.okanaganbreastfeeding.org)
- Acknowledged in other promotional materials
- Allowed to identify yourself as being 'Breastfeeding Friendly', and use the logo on your communication materials
- Recognized by families as a business that supports the health of children, mothers, and communities

# BREASTFEEDING WELCOME HERE

## *Invitation to Businesses*



Dear Okanagan business owner,

The most effective way of giving a baby a healthy start in life is breastfeeding. When compared to formula feeding, breastfeeding contributes to healthier children as it provides optimal nutrition and immunological protection, which decreases the risk of illness and hospitalization. The World Health Organization, Health Canada and the Canadian Pediatric Society agree that babies should be breastfed exclusively for the first 6 months of life and to continue to breastfeed along with complementary foods for 2 years and beyond.

Despite this, breastfeeding mothers often stop before the recommended age. In the Okanagan, 95% of mothers are breastfeeding their babies when they leave the hospital, but less than one third continue for the recommended duration. One of the major contributing factors to this early weaning is western society's stigmatizing view towards the woman's breast's not being covered in public. Our entrenched bottle-feeding culture, public policy, institutional and employment practices, and overall negative attitudes towards breastfeeding often leaves mothers feeling uncomfortable to breastfeed their child in public.

In response, a local initiative is underway to support mothers to sustain breastfeeding to 6 months and beyond by normalizing breastfeeding within the community. One component of this program is establishing a partnership with local businesses and other public spaces, to facilitate a welcoming environment for mothers and babies who are breastfeeding.

We are extending an invitation to the Okanagan business community and other facilities with public spaces to participate in this initiative.

**Contact us: [okanaganbreastfeeding@gmail.com](mailto:okanaganbreastfeeding@gmail.com) or (250) 770-3418**

# Human Rights in British Columbia

## SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

British Columbia's Human Rights Code protects people from being treated differently and poorly because of their gender, pregnancy, breastfeeding and sexual harassment. This Code is an important law that exists to protect people from discrimination and harassment.

If an individual or group who believe they have been discriminated against or harassed, the Code not only protects but allows a person or group to file a complaint with the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal.

### SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

Sexual discrimination means treating some differently because of their gender and includes:

- Denial of service
- Not hiring or promoting someone
- Firing someone

### PREGNANT & BREASTFEEDING WOMEN

It is illegal to discriminate against a woman because she may become pregnant, is pregnant, or has a baby

NURSING MOTHERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BREASTFEED THEIR CHILDREN IN A PUBLIC AREA, AND IT IS DISCRIMINATORY TO ASK THEM TO COVER UP OR BREASTFEED SOMEWHERE ELSE.

IN B.C., IT IS ILLEGAL TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST OR HARASS A PERSON BECAUSE OF THEIR SEX WHICH INCLUDES:

### PREGNANCY, BREASTFEEDING & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The code applies to all businesses, agencies and services regulated by the province. It protects people from the discrimination and harassment in public situations, which includes schools, universities, hospitals, medical clinics, stores, restaurants, provincial and local government offices, and transit services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT HUMAN RIGHTS IN B.C.'S SEX DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

# WE ARE PROUD TO BE A *Breastfeeding Friendly Business*

- We acknowledge the health benefits breastfeeding has for children, mothers, and the community.
- We acknowledge the role the community plays in valuing and validating public breastfeeding.
- We understand that mothers have the right to breastfeed their child anytime, anywhere, and are protected by the British Columbia Human Rights Code.
- We support a mother's choice to breastfeed when their child is hungry either in a public or a more private setting if available.
- We strive to create a welcoming environment for all parents and children (no matter how they choose to feed their baby)



*Please let us know if  
there is any other way we  
can assist you in meeting  
your baby's needs*

# THE BENEFITS OF *Breastfeeding*

## *Benefits for Baby*

### **Reduces the baby's risk of:**

- Allergies
- Cardiovascular disease
- Childhood cancer
- Diabetes
- Infection
- Obesity
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
- Enhances the baby's brain development
- Enhances the bonding experience

## *Benefits for Mother*

### **Reduces a mother's risk of:**

- Breast, ovarian and uterine cancer
- Osteoporosis
- Heart disease
- Lose weight more easily after birth
- Enhances the bonding experience

## *Benefits for the Family and Community*

Formula feedings cost a family an average of \$1500 per year

Breastfeeding saves the Canadian Healthcare System millions of dollars per year

Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly

No industrial pollution, transportation, energy resources for preparation and cleaning, landfill waste



# A Guide for Staff

YOU CAN HELP BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE - IT'S EASY!

## WHAT TO SAY IF A CUSTOMER IS CONCERNED ABOUT A BREASTFEEDING MOTHER?

Tactfully inform them that the B.C. Human Rights Code states that children have a right to breastfeed anywhere, anytime.

Explain that neither you or the customer can ask a breastfeeding mother to cover up or relocate.

If appropriate, offer to move the concerned customer to a more comfortable location.

1. READ THE BC HUMAN RIGHTS CODE
2. LEARN WHY BREASTFEEDING IS IMPORTANT FOR THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN, MOTHERS, AND THE COMMUNITY.
3. UNDERSTAND WHY CREATING A COMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE FOR ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, NO MATTER HOW THEY ARE BEING FED, IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS
4. BE WELCOMING TO MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN
  - Ask her where she would like to sit
  - Be friendly, say 'hello' to her child
  - Engage with the mother just as you would any customer; make eye contact and smile - this shows support.
5. **ONLY IF REQUESTED BY THE MOTHER**, OFFER A SPACE (IF AVAILABLE) THAT IS APPROPRIATE, COMFORTABLE AND QUIET.
6. DON'T DIRECT A MOTHER TO THE WASHROOM TO BREASTFEED. IT IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE AND INAPPROPRIATE PLACE FOR A CHILD TO EAT.

# Support

IF YOU REQUIRE ANY ASSISTANCE TO  
BECOME 'BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY' OR IF  
YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS  
WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU.

## *Contact Us*

OKANAGANBREASTFEEDING@GMAIL.COM  
OR 250-770-3418

*For more information visit*

[WWW.OKANAGANBREASTFEEDING.ORG](http://WWW.OKANAGANBREASTFEEDING.ORG)

